



The Catholic Parishes of Branxton and Singleton are part of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

The Ascension of the Lord, Year A

17 May 2026

First Reading

Acts 1:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said, 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 46:2-3. 6-9. R. v.6

(R.) God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

All peoples, clap your hands,
cry to God with shouts of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,
great king over all the earth. **(R.)**

God goes up with shouts of joy;
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.
Sing praise for God, sing praise,
sing praise to our king, sing praise. **(R.)**

God is king of all the earth.
Sing praise with all your skill.
God is king over the nations;
God reigns on his holy throne. **(R.)**

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:17-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation Matthew 28:19. 20

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 28:16-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave to you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



LEO'S LENS

REFLECTION BY NICK BRODIE

When Jesus calls his disciples into action, Pope Leo XIV explains, we can perceive 'the intimate connection between the words uttered by Christ and their dissemination throughout the centuries.' His call remains just as vital for us here and now as it did to the apostles back then.

'The Word of God,' the Pope elaborates, 'is not fossilised, but rather it is a living and organic reality that develops and grows in Tradition.'

The Word of God is more than words remembered or written, the Pope wants us to understand. The Word speaks to us through the unity of scripture and tradition. 'Thanks to the Holy Spirit,' the Pope adds, 'tradition understands it in the richness of its truth and embodies it in the shifting coordinates of history.' Christ, the Word of God, has entered human history in a unique and lasting way.

On this basis, the Pope encourages us to recall that 'Christianity, both as a communal experience and as a doctrine, is a dynamic reality, in the manner indicated by Jesus himself.' It is more than a memory, but rather 'a living reality that develops thanks to an inner vital force.' Such vitality should give us the confidence to get to work as Jesus wants, living the Gospel we proclaim.

[Quotes from General Audience, 28 January 2026: <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/audiences/2026/documents/20260128-udienza-generale.html>]

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens? This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven will return as you saw him go, alleluia.	We remember in our prayers: Sick: Cecily Agnew, Michael Agnew, Sienna Baker, Lorraine Cooper, Brady Curtis, José Joaquim De Sousa, Fleur McAlister, Jen Phillips, Paul Ruigrok, Vincent Smolenaers, Sharon Wood, Elizabeth, Dorothea. Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.
COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, alleluia	Baptisms: Archie, Oliver & Bailey Orlowski and Huxton Orlowski (Branxton). Remy Kerr, Reuben Alexander, Teddy Knight and Eric Ingram (Singleton). Called by name to be a child of God.
NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES Pentecost, Year A 1st Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11 2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13 Gospel: John 20:19-23	Recently Deceased: Ian Dunlop (Hawkes Nest)
MYSTERY OF FAITH When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.	Anniversaries: Jimmy McAleer, Margaret Dagg, Lorraine Edwards, Patrick Slattery, Nellie Meyn. Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

PARISH CONTACTS

Parish Administrator	Rev Thomas Chirackal	Presbytery: 6578 9651	Email: Thomas.chirackal@mn.catholic.org.au
Parish Secretary	Mrs Erica Janssen	Parish Office: 02 5507 4048 (Tues-Fri, 9am-3pm) Unit 5, 16 Cambridge St, Singleton	Email: singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au Web: www.singletoncatholicparish.org.au
Facebook	Catholic Parishes of Singleton and Branxton	Promoters of Safeguarding Contact via the Parish Office	Singleton Parish: Niamh Marzol Branxton Parish: Allan Humphreys
PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
St Patrick's Parish	Singleton	<i>St Patrick's Church</i>	Queen Street Singleton 2330
Broke		<i>Immaculate Conception Catholic Church</i>	Wollombi Street, Broke
Glendon Brook		<i>St. Paul's Catholic Church</i>	874 Glendonbrook Road, Glendon Brook
PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
St Brigid's Parish	Branxton	<i>St Brigid's Catholic Church</i>	Station St, Branxton 2335
Greta		<i>St Catherine's Catholic Church</i>	Branxton Street, Greta 2334

Schools in our Parishes			
St. Catherine's Catholic College	<i>Principal: Mr David Crawford</i>	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au
Rosary Park Catholic School	<i>Principal: Mr Ashley Borg</i>	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au

MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 24 MAY 2026

	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8.15am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 5pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	C Langford	J Dries	J Dries	Tues 19 May G McMillan C Langford
Commentator		K Ingold	G Cattermole	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	H Rapp	
Readers	J Stafa S Stafa	L Harrison	S Bates N Alexandroy	L Stevenson H Sapitula	H Rapp C Brackenrigh O Brackenrigh	
Prayers		K Ingold	H Duldulao	Donna	A Skardon	
Offertory	A Trunk S McAlister	Joan Norma	J Tindale E Thomas	A, B & A Jacob	VOLUNTEERS NEEDED	
Extraordinary Minister	N/A	N/A	J Dunn	T Cochrane	C Tysoe	

Faithful and compassionate God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy; hear the prayers we offer, that in the ministry to which you have called us, may we serve you faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

WEEKLY MASS DIARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
18 May <i>St John I</i>	19 May	20 May <i>St Bernadine of Siena</i>	21 May <i>St Christopher Magallanes & Com.</i>	22 May <i>St Rita of Cascia</i>	23 May	24 May PENTECOST SUNDAY, YEAR A
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN		
<u>8.00am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> LOTW St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</u> LOTW St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Anointing Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton <u>5.00pm</u> SCAE Glendonbrook	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00am</u> SCAE <u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton
	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta		NO MASS St Brigid's Branxton		<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton	<u>7.50am</u> Rosary <u>8.15am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta

St Brigid, St Catherine, St Patrick, and St Paul – pray for us

Weekly Notices

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

We welcome visitors from all faith communities to our Parish Mass. If you are new members of our Parish, we ask that you contact the Parish Office for a Welcome Pack, complete and return the Member forms and one of our welcoming team will contact you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Our parishes acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Wonnarua people, who have walked upon and cared for the land we meet on for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Information brochures are available in the entrance to the church. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult, contact the Office of Safeguarding 02 49791390 or childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au or visit www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au for more information and resources.

Mass Changes This Week

As Fr Thomas will be attending the Clergy Conference on Wednesday 20 May and Thursday 21 May Mass will not be said on these days.

St Brigid's Caritas Monthly Lunch

The St Brigid's Caritas Group will hold their monthly lunch on Friday 22 May at 12pm in Miller Park Hotel Branxton. All are invited to join them for fellowship over a meal.

St Catherine's Greta – Morning Tea

You are invited to stay after Mass at St Catherine's Church Greta on Sunday 31 May for morning tea and a chat with fellow parishioners.

Celebrating 60 Years of the St. Patrick's Women's Guild

Since their very first meeting on April 16, 1966, the Women's Guild has been a cornerstone of our Parish life. We are delighted to invite all parishioners to join us in honouring their 60 years of dedicated service with a *Mass and Anniversary Luncheon* on Saturday, 13 June 2026. Mass will be said in St Patrick's Church at 11am followed by lunch at Club Singleton. Those attending are asked to pay \$40 per head for a two-course meal and cake for dessert. To help us finalise our bookings, please RSVP to the *Parish Office* by 30 May 2026. We look forward to marking this amazing occasion with you!

Vinnies Needs Your Help!

Our local St Vincent de Paul store in Singleton is looking for volunteers to help us continue our mission of supporting those in need. We invite you to join our team! Whether you have a few hours to spare *weekly or fortnightly*, your time helps us keep our doors open and our community supported. It is a wonderful way to give back and meet new people.

How to help:

- **Visit us:** Drop into the store on Macquarie Street, Singleton to chat with our team about how to get involved.
- **Apply online:** you can find out more and apply at vinnies.org.au/get-involved/volunteering/volunteer-with-us

Pray for Persecuted Christians in Nigeria

Christians in Nigeria continue to suffer greatly for their faith, yet many persevere with deep trust in Christ and devotion to Our Lady. *Aid to the Church in Need* invites you to join with John, a Catholic farmer in Nigeria, in praying a decade of the Rosary this week for persecuted Christians and all who suffer for their faith.

Watch John's moving testimony and **download a free Red Rosary Prayer Card** at <https://aidtochurch.ac-page.com/red-rosary-download-prayer-card>

National Count of Attendance at Mass



The Catholic Church in Australia is gearing up for a nationwide measure of Mass attendance. In May, the *Australian Catholic Bishops Conference* will conduct the 6th National Count of Attendance.

This year marks 25 years of collecting valuable insights into long-term trends within the Catholic Church. The National Count is conducted in the same year as the Australian Census [to be held on August 11] so that the information collected can most effectively be used in association with results from the other. Weekends 1 and 2 are a basic head count, Week 3 includes how many males and females are in attendance and Week 4 counts how many people are attending from five age brackets. You won't be asked to do anything different, but please be patient as our helpers at Mass take the time to do the counts.

Volunteer Week – “Your Year to Volunteer”

Volunteer Week begins Monday 18 May, and this year's theme – “Your Year to Volunteer” – is a beautiful reminder that every person has something life-giving to offer. As a faith community, we especially hold in prayer those who give their time to serve as Special Religious Education teachers in our local public schools. Their presence brings hope, connection, and the light of Christ to children who may not encounter it anywhere else.

This Volunteer Week, we gently and wholeheartedly invite you to consider whether this might be your year to step into this ministry. Becoming an SRE teacher is an act of love – a simple “yes” that can shape a child's understanding of faith for years to come. If you feel a nudge, a curiosity, or even the smallest spark, we would love to walk with you. Contact: singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au | 5507 4048 or nicola.graham@mn.catholic.org.au

Bishop's Staff Day

Our Parish is included in Bishop's Staff Day this year. We are calling on parishioners to take part on Tuesday 2 June, from 10:00am–2:00pm. This special gathering is an opportunity for diocesan staff to step out from their offices and into parish life to “come together around our shared mission” and connect more deeply with parish communities. Over 200 staff will be split into groups of 40 to visit one of seven parish sites, with our parish being one site. Your presence will help tell the story of our parish; it's faith, its people, it's quiet acts of service and hope. In meeting one another, we strengthen the bond that holds us together as the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Please consider being part of this important day. Speak to Fr Thomas to express your interest.

Diocesan Cursillo 3-Day Course

Do you wonder how to be more fully alive? If so, then you may like to consider attending our Cursillo 3-day course.

The annual Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle 2026 Cursillo 3 days has the theme “Joy of the Lord is my strength”.

The Cursillo is actually a short course that will enrich your faith for the rest of your life. It is Christ-centred, based on gospel values, and will be asking each participant “*How can I **BE** Christian in my many everyday environments?*”

It will be held at Catalina Conference Centre, Rathmines from 7.30pm Thursday 11 June to 5.30pm Sunday 14 June at a cost of \$360.00 per person (includes 3 nights accommodation and all meals).

If you are interested in joining the Cursillo Movement, enrolling for the Cursillo 3 days, or just wishing to learn more about Cursillo, please feel free to contact either of the following:

DAVID McGOVERN: 0493 394 323 or via email: livedogster@gmail.com or **JOANNE STANDING:** 0401 438 967 or via email: joannestanding@gmail.com

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

Not the only Ascension

The description of Jesus being taken up into heaven is a close parallel to the description of the great prophet Elijah also being taken up to heaven. Chapter 2 of 2 Kings describes Elijah speaking to his disciple Elisha in similar words to those used by Jesus to his disciples. The Jewish tradition had no belief in an individual resurrection and so the idea of Ascension was to recognise the greatness of the prophet. He was to be united with God in Heaven rather than having to wait for the great resurrection of all people at the end of time.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

You will be my witnesses

A witness in a court of law is called to give evidence about a matter; to 'testify' to the truth of what they have seen or what they know to be true. Some people are very good at being a 'witness' to their faith by testifying to others about what they believe. Many others provide a witness to their faith by simply living what they believe. Living a life based on Christian principles, including regular prayer and worship in your life, working for justice in the world and taking time to celebrate the beauty of everyday life is a powerful witness to others.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

To the ends of the earth

In both the gospel passage from Matthew and the passage from the Book of Acts, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go out to the whole world. In Matthew, it is to 'all the nations' and in Acts it is 'to the ends of the earth'. Both writers make it abundantly clear that the message of Jesus is not exclusively for the people of Israel but for all people everywhere. Within only a very few years, early Christian communities had sprung up all around the Mediterranean. Once Christianity became the religion of Rome it spread to all the corners of the Roman Empire.



Hope Tree
Group

Project 33 - A House for Omana

Can you help contribute to providing a safe and dignified home for Omana?

Omana faces significant daily challenges; she is a person with a disability, having lost her leg due to complications from severe diabetes. She currently resides with her son, a seasonal agricultural labourer, whose modest income is not enough to cover the costs of a stable home.

While a local government grant of Rs 500,000 has been secured to begin construction, it falls short of the amount needed to make the house liveable. An additional Rs 200,000 (\$2898 AUD) is required to complete the structure and ensure Omana has a roof over her head.

How You Can Help: Any amount, large or small, will go directly toward the completion of Omana's home, bridging the gap to provide her with the security and comfort she deserves.

Donation Details:

- Place your donation in the HOPE TREE Collection box at Mass
- Click on the DONATE button on our parish website <https://singletoncatholicparish.org.au/> to make an online or electronic transfer donation.

Thank you for your continued compassion and for being the "hope" in the Hope Tree Group. Together, we can help Omana move into her new home.

